

programs in areas of the food and agricultural sciences designated as national need areas. Only Fellows enrolled in doctoral programs of study may be supported under doctoral degree Fellowship grants. Only USDA Graduate Fellows who have completed their doctoral degrees may be supported under postdoctoral Fellowship grants.

§ 3402.8 Fellowship activities.

A USDA Graduate Fellow shall be enrolled as a full-time graduate student, as defined by the institution, at all times during the tenure of the Fellowship in the national need area and at the degree level supported by the grant. This includes the time used for special international study or thesis/dissertation research, if the international travel is funded through a special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowance under this grant program. However, the normal requirement for formal registration during part of this tenure may be waived if permitted by the policy of the Fellowship institution, provided that the Graduate Fellow is making satisfactory progress toward degree completion and remains engaged in appropriate full-time Fellowship activities such as thesis/dissertation research. Postdoctoral Fellowship appointments may be held only by persons who pursue full-time traineeship in research, teaching, or extension in the national need area and are supervised by the mentor indicated in the grant application. Graduate and postdoctoral Fellows in academic institutions are not entitled to vacations as such. They are entitled to the short normal student holidays observed by the institution. The time between academic semesters or quarters is to be utilized as an active part of the grant period. During the period of support, USDA Graduate and Postdoctoral Fellows are permitted, at the discretion of their institutions, to accept additional supplemental employment that would positively contribute to their training or research and provide eligibility for tuition waivers (e.g., full or partial tuition waivers provided with research or teaching assignments). A Fellow may

accept from any other entity a grant supporting the Fellow's research costs.

§ 3402.9 Financial provisions.

An institution may elect to apply the cost-of-education/training institutional allowance to a Fellow's tuition, fees and laboratory expenses and to defray other program expenses (e.g., recruitment, travel, publications, or salaries of project personnel), unless stated otherwise in the solicitation. Tuition and fees are the responsibility of the Fellow unless an institution elects to use its cost-of-education institutional allowance for this purpose or elects to pay such costs out of non-USDA monies. No dependency allowances are provided to any USDA Graduate or Postdoctoral Fellows. Stipend payments and special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowances may be made to Fellows by the institution, in accordance with standard institutional procedures for graduate and postdoctoral fellowships and assistantships.

Subpart C—Preparation of an Application

§ 3402.10 Application package.

Applications will be available at <http://www.grants.gov> and through the NIFA Web site. An application package will be made available to any potential grant applicant upon request. This package will include all necessary forms and instructions to apply for a grant under this program.

§ 3402.11 Proposal cover page.

The Proposal Cover Page, Form NIFA-2002, must be completed in its entirety, including all authorizing signatures. One copy of each grant application must contain the original pen-and-ink signatures, or approved electronic equivalent, of:

- (a) The Project Director(s); and
- (b) The Authorized Organizational Representative for the institution.

§ 3402.12 Project summary.

Using the Project Summary, Form NIFA-2003, applicants must summarize the proposed graduate program of study and/or the academic and research

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strengths of the institution in the national need area for which funding is requested. To the extent possible, applicants should emphasize the uniqueness of the proposed program of training. The summary should not include any reference to the specific number of fellowships requested. The information on Form NIFA-2003 will be used in assigning the most appropriate panelists to review an application. If an application is supported, this Form may be used in program publications.

§ 3402.13 National need narrative.

HEP will determine the composition of the narrative for each competition, including page limits, font size, the number and the order of sections, and other supporting information that may be required. Detailed instructions for preparing the narrative will be published in the solicitation.

§ 3402.14 Budget and budget narrative.

Applicants must prepare the Budget, Form NIFA-2004, and a budget narrative identifying all costs associated with the application. Instructions for completing the Budget are provided with the form.

§ 3402.15 Faculty vitae.

This section should include a Summary Vita, no more than 2 pages excluding publications listing, for each faculty member contributing significantly to institutional competence at the level of graduate study for the national need area addressed in the application. Applicants should arrange the faculty vitae with the Project Director(s) first, followed by the remaining faculty, in alphabetical order.

§ 3402.16 Appendix.

Any additional supporting information deemed essential to enhancing the application should be included in an Appendix and referenced in the national need narrative.

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Subpart D—Submission and Evaluation of an Application

§ 3402.17 Where to submit an application.

The solicitation will indicate the date for submission of applications and the number of application copies required to apply for a grant. In addition, the solicitation will provide the address to which the application, the required number of accompanying duplicate copies, and any other required forms and materials should be sent.

§ 3402.18 Evaluation criteria.

Applications addressing a particular national need area at a particular Fellowship level (master's, doctoral or postdoctoral) will be evaluated in competition with other applications addressing the same national need area at the same level. Both USDA internal staff and the panelists will evaluate applications on the basis of the criteria published in the solicitation.

Subpart E—Supplementary Information

§ 3402.19 Terms and conditions of grant awards.

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the awarding official shall make project grants to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious according to evaluation criteria stated in the solicitation. The beginning of the project period shall be no later than September 30 of the Federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support. All funds granted under this part shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, the regulations of this part, the terms and conditions of the award, the applicable Federal cost principles, and the Department's assistance regulations (parts 3015 and 3019 of 7 CFR).